

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CAB-09 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00

EB-11 INR-11 NSAE-00 RSC-01 FAA-00 NEAE-00 PM-07 H-03

L-03 NSC-07 PA-04 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 AID-20

XMB-07 MC-02 CIEP-02 OMB-01 DRC-01 /145 W

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P 171107Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1035

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 1430

BEIRUT FOR RCAA DWOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRN, SY

SUBJECT: ARAB AIRLINE AIRCRAFT ACQUISITION

REF: A. ABU DHABI 941; B. BEIRUT 8193

1. FURTHER TO MY TELCOM WITH COUNTRY DIRECTOR KORN ON JULY 16 I RECOMMEND THAT IF SECRETARY OF COMMERCE DENT WISHES TO WRITE A LETTER TO THE SYRIAN GOVERNMENT CONCERNING THE PURCHASE BY THE SYRIAN ARAB AIRLINES OF AIRCRAFT THAT THIS COMMUNICATION BE ADDRESSED TO MAJOR GENERAL ASSAD MOKAYED IN HIS CAPACITY BOTH AS CHAIRMAN OF SYRIAN ARAB AIRLINES AS WELL AS THE SPECIAL PURCHASE COMMITTEE ESTABLISHED TO CONSIDER THIS MATTER.

2. IN THIS CONNECTION I WAS ALSO INFORMED YESTERDAY AFTER-NOON BY JOHN MORRIS, DIRECTOR OF SALES FOR THE MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA, MCDONNELL DOUGLAS, THAT WHILE OFFICIALLY INFORMED THAT DC-10 IS NO LONGER BEING CONSIDERED, MCDONNELL DOUGLAS HAS REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THE DC-10 STILL HAS A
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CHANCE AND, THEREFORE, MCDONNELL DOUGLAS WILL CONTINUE TO

DO WHAT IT CAN TO PRESENT ITS CASE. I ASSURED MR. MORRIS THAT I STOOD READY TO BE A HELP TO HIM AND HIS COMPANY IN THEIR ENDEAVORS. I SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED THAT I WAS STILL PURSUING THE CASE OF ROBERT FOX IN AN EFFORT TO ASCERTAIN WHY HE HAD BEEN DENIED RE-ENTRY INTO SYRIA ON JULY 13. MR. MORRIS EXPRESSED HIS APPRECIATION FOR THE EMBASSY'S EFFORTS AND PROMISED TO KEEP IN TOUCH.

3. MEANWHILE THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR CALLED ME YESTERDAY AFTERNOON (JULY 16) TO SAY THAT HE WAS NOT SURE WHETHER MAHDI TAJER (ABU DHABI FINANCIAL ADVISER) HAD EVER GOTTEN TO DAMASCUS TO DISCUSS THIS MATTER. HE PROMISED TO KEEP ME INFORMED SHOULD HE HEAR ANYTHING ELSE.

4. COMMENT: NEEDLESS TO SAY, THE SITUATION AT THE PRESENT TIME CONCERNING THE SYRIAN ARAB AIRLINE PURCHASE IS MURKY INDEED. IN VIEW OF THIS I WOULD RECOMMEND THAT SECRETARY DENT'S LETTER BE PITCHED IN TERMS OF AMERICAN AIRCRAFT IN GENERAL AND NOT FOCUS ON ONE AIRCRAFT MANUFACTURER TO THE EXCLUSION OF ANOTHER. I BELIEVE WE ARE WITNESSING A CLASSIC EXAMPLE OF INTERNAL MANEUVERING AND MACHINATIONS WHICH HAVE NO DOUBT BECOME INTERWOVEN WITH PERSONAL AMBITION AND GREED. I BELIEVE THAT WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO DO OUR BEST TO STAND BEHIND THE AMERICAN COMPANIES BUT I THINK WE MUST ALSO BE CAREFUL LEST WE GET SUCKED INTO A LOCAL BUREUCRATIC MAELSTROM AT THIS PARTICULARLY DELICATE TIME IN THE HISTORY OF OUR POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH SYRIA.
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